

## THE END.

Our Details of the Decisive Contest of Sunday.

WHAT GRANT HAS ACCOMPLISHED

The Destruction of Lee's Army.

Twenty-five Thousand Rebels Taken Prisoners.

Fifteen Thousand Rebels Killed and Wounded.

One or Two Hundred Large Guns Captured.

Twenty-eight Locomotives, Forty-four Passenger Cars and One Hundred and Six Freight Cars Found in Richmond.

THE PURSUIT OF THE ROUTED REBELS

MORE PRISONERS TAKEN.

The Rebel Line of Retreat Strawn with Artillery, Ammunition, Wagons and Caissons.

THE REBEL GENERAL A. P. HILL KILLED.

The Union Losses in the Campaign Less Than Seven Thousand.

Another Herald Correspondent Wounded.

The Capture of Lee's Headquarters.

OCCUPATION OF PETERSBURG.

ITS ENORMOUS DEFENCES.

THE REBEL RAMS BLOWN UP.

LAUS DEO.

THE OFFICIAL DESPATCHES.

Secretary Stanton to General Dix.

Major General Dix, New York.

The following particulars, dated at City Point, April 4, at eight o'clock A. M., give the latest information received from Richmond.

General Wadsworth telegraphed from Richmond that of railroad stock he found there twenty-eight locomotives, forty-four passenger and baggage cars, and one hundred and six freight cars.

At half-past three o'clock this morning General Grant, from Sudbury station, ten miles from Petersburg, telegraphed as follows:

General Sheridan picked up twelve hundred prisoners to-day, and from three to five hundred more have been gathered by our troops. The majority of the arms that were left in the hands of Lee's army are now scattered between Richmond and where his troops now are.

The country is also full of stragglers. The line of retreat is marked with artillery, ammunition, burned or charred wagons, caissons, ambulances, &amp;c.

E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

Secretary Stanton's Second Despatch.

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C., April 4—11 P. M.

Major General John A. Dix, New York.

The following telegram from General Grant has just reached this department. What hour to-day it left him does not appear, but probably in the afternoon.

No details of the casualties have been received, but they are expected here to-morrow.

The statement that official information had been received of General Grant being killed is not true. He was unhurt in this afternoon.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

General Grant's Despatch.

WILSON STATION, Va., April 4, 1865.

Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

very heavy. Houses through the country are nearly all

In every direction I hear of rebel soldiers pushing for home, some in large, some in small squads, and generally without arms.

The cavalry have pursued so closely that the enemy have been forced to destroy probably the greater part of their transportation, caissons and munitions of war.

The number of prisoners captured yesterday will exceed two thousand.

From the 28th of March to the present time our loss, in killed, wounded and captured, will not, probably, reach seven thousand, of whom from one thousand five hundred to two thousand were captured, and many but slightly wounded.

I shall continue the pursuit as long as there appears to be any use in it.

U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant General.

THE HERALD DESPATCHES.

THE CAPTURE OF PETERSBURG.

Mr. Thomas M. Cook's Despatch.

Petersburg, Va., April 5, 1865.

Petersburg is ours. The three words tell the story. With its fall the rebel capital falls. Volumes that may be written will scarcely do to the intensity of the joy that will fill the popular heart of the North at the announcement. General Grant has added a new laurel to his great fame as a military chieftain. He has boarded the lion in his den and conquered him. Lee's army has received a more terrible crushing than it ever met with before, and is lying in scattered parts, a third of it being now prisoners in our hands.

SUMMARY OF MILITARY OPERATIONS.

Let me briefly summarize before proceeding to elaborate the details of the brilliant combinations and movements that have resulted so gloriously.

THE BATTLE OF SUNDAY.

The operations of yesterday cut the rebel army on the south of the Appomattox in twain. The elegant fighting of the Ninth, Sixth and Twenty-fourth corps gained for us an entrance into and possession of the main rebel works west of the Baxter road, leading into Petersburg, with their guns and an immense number of prisoners. Still further to the left Sheridan was operating with his grand column of cavalry, supported by the Fifth and a portion of the Second corps. The operations nearer Petersburg severed the rebel lines, leaving the forces confronting at Sheridan isolated. The whole right wing of Lee's army was thus cut off and in imminent danger of being captured bodily. Vigorous pushing gained for us numbers of prisoners, but, for reasons set forth in the despatches of your correspondents with that part of the army, the main force managed to withdraw in the direction of the Upper Appomattox.

Pressing our advantages on the right, we rapidly doubled the rebel lines up when night intervened, giving them an opportunity of withdrawing, which they did, leaving their guns, tents and works as we had previously captured, and the road was left open for our advance into the city, which was made at half-past four o'clock this morning by Colonel Ralph Ely's Second brigade of Breve Major General Orlando B. Wilcox's First division of the Ninth corps, Major General Parke commanding. The First Michigan sharpshooters are the undisputed claimants of the honor of the first entry into the city.

THE VICTORY.

At this writing it is impossible to give anything like accurate reports of the result of the success. Up to last evening twelve thousand five hundred prisoners had been reported at general headquarters. It is but a small estimate to suppose that ten thousand were added to the number during the night and this morning—making twenty-five thousand in all. One hundred pieces of artillery, including siege guns of all calibres, in the works about the city, will be no mean item in the grand result. Small arms by the tens of thousands we have. Immense warehouses filled with all manner of army stores still remain unharmed in Petersburg. Battle flags, army wagons, camp and garrison equipage, horses, mules, &amp;c., beyond estimate are included in the captures. The rebel losses, also, by this signal victory, the further success of such men as General A. P. Hill and Colonel Pegram, both killed in action, and a host of officers of lesser note. The casualties among their officers have been fearfully disproportionate to those among their men; an indication, at least, of the rapidly increasing demoralization of their army, requiring unusual exposure by their officers to keep them up to the fighting spirit.

CHARACTER OF THE FIGHTING.

The fighting that has won us this signal victory has been vastly different from that which has hitherto characterized the conflicts between these two armies. It has not been the steady, organized, determined, unyielding, deadly struggle of Chancellorsville, or Gettysburg, or the Wilderness. The slain are not numbered by scores of thousands. The hospitals are not overrun with torn and bleeding patients. Many good men have fallen, and the hospitals contain numbers of brave men wounded, but not to exceed twelve or fifteen thousand, if so many, have been disabled. I doubt whether the number will exceed ten thousand. Such, then, being the general character and result of the glorious affair, doubtless the reader will be interested in reading the story more in detail.

OPERATIONS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE PETERSBURG.

The operations up to Saturday night have already been given in full. Sunday morning's battle has been briefly alluded to. The full operations of that day are given by the HERALD's corps of correspondents—each from his own standpoint. It was my fortune to be with the right of our line, where the Ninth corps was posted in the old works of the Army of the Potomac. The work assigned to this corps in the original plan of the movement was simply to hold this line while the rest of the army moved out on the left to draw Lee out of his works or turn his flank. The movement succeeded in both objects, and hence the magnitude of our victory.

THE MAIN CORPS.

The line held by the Ninth corps extended from the Appomattox to the Weldon Railroad, a distance of fully five miles, confronted at all points by the strongest works of the rebels, mounted with their heaviest artillery. These are the opposing lines, the extending and strengthening and perfecting of which have occupied the two armies since early last summer. They are what an officer yesterday aptly termed "the bloody lines." Between them have been fought all the battles that have occurred in front of Petersburg.

WILCOX'S LINE.

The First division of the Ninth corps, under command of Breve Major General Orlando B. Wilcox, held the extreme right, having as its particular territory the line from the Appomattox to Fort Emory, just west of the Baxter road, something over two miles in extent. To this portion of the line I attached myself, and the important operations here effected I will relate.

A DEMONSTRATION.

At midnight on Saturday General Wilcox received orders to make a demonstration on his extreme right, in order to draw as many of the rebels as possible in that direction, and thus assist the attacks that had been planned for the following morning. The demonstration was made with great earnestness at the same time that Admiral Porter was hammering away with his gunboats up the James river. All the artillery on that part of the line was ordered into play, and the skirmish line in front of Ely's brigade was advanced. The moon was yet shining and the night was perfectly clear, so that the attack was distinctly witnessed from the bluff in the rear. The men moved forward steadily, and soon the sharp lines of musketry indicated their approach to the rebel lines; the artillery on the heights behind them fired more briskly, the shells shrieking through the air over their heads. Then the rebel batteries opened, and a most infernal din was awakened to disturb the peaceful slumbers of the midnight. Amid the noise and smoke the skirmishers kept steadily on, meeting with so little opposition that they were enabled to cross the rebel lines, enter their works, capture prisoners in numbers greater than their own, and finally advanced into the outskirts of the town, where they met a strong body of rebels coming out to reinforce the portion of the line that had just been captured. A brisk engagement was fought here, within the limits of the city; but our numbers were

so small that we were compelled to withdraw, and reluctantly fall back to our own lines. Had the troops been at hand to reinforce this movement, instead of being simply a demonstration it could easily have been turned into an actual attack, and would have given us then the whole left of the rebel line of works and cut them off from Petersburg entirely. General Wilcox was very anxious to so change the character of the attack; but at the critical moment he received orders to fall back at the earliest dawn of morning on his left, so that he could do nothing more at this time. The success of this demonstration gave rise to the report, which was sent away yesterday morning, that we had possession of Petersburg. In the movement we lost a few men only, among them Lieutenant Colonel Nichols, of the First Michigan sharpshooters, seriously wounded. One effect of the movement was most excellent. Lee had mobilized so large a portion of his army against Sheridan that there was merely a picket line left here. The demonstration compelled him to recall some of the troops that had been sent elsewhere, in order that he should not be flanked here.

AN EARLY ATTACK.

So soon as this affair was over Wilcox began making his few available men for the appointed attack on the left. This was to be a combined and determined attack on the rebel front so far as our troops, properly formed, could attack. The object was twofold:—First, by a more earnest demonstration to recall a greater portion of the rebels who were massed on their extreme right; and second, if possible, to force their lines.

PORT MAHON.

The part of the attack assigned to General Wilcox was to carry Fort Mahon, one of the most formidable works on the rebel lines, situated at the point where their line crosses the Jerusalem plank road and directly in front of Fort Emory, where the left of Wilcox's division rested. For this purpose the first brigade, Colonel Samuel Harrison, of the Thirty-seventh Wisconsin, was brought around from the right of the line and put into position, supported by a brigade of Porter's division of the same corps. While this was being done similar dispositions were making further to the left, and a system of cannon signals had been agreed upon to fix the moment of starting, that all hands might assault simultaneously.

DARKNESS.

At precisely four o'clock the signal gun was heard. It was yet scarcely gray dawn and a considerable mist hung over the fields, so that objects were quite indistinct at a very short distance and not visible at all a few hundred yards away. From this cause the preparations made had been wholly secreted from the enemy. The signal gun, breaking the stillness of the early morning, may possibly have been an alarm of danger to them; but, as they knew not whence to look, they doubtless simply remained very quiet.

THE ASSAULT.

Colonel Harrison advanced at once. A small detachment of his brigade was thrown out in advance as skirmishers, while the rest followed close after in line of battle with fixed bayonets. The men moved very quietly and in perfect order, though manifesting an eagerness of spirit that was an assurance of success. That they went to stay was indicated by their being accompanied by a detachment of one hundred men of the First Connecticut heavy artillery, prepared to turn and work upon the rebels the guns that should be captured. They passed out into the darkness and all was still. A painful reason of suspense followed. Presently musketry is heard, then another, and soon a volley. They have reached the rebel picket line. Now a hearty cheer is heard, followed by a roar of musketry. The cheering and the musketry firing is taken up and runs along to the left until it is lost in the distance. The flash of the muskets disclose the positions. Instantly the artillery of both sides is at work, and two hundred guns belch forth their thunder tones of anger. In the roar of the artillery all other sounds are hushed or drowned. But the work is done. It was done quickly. A second cheer and a second volley from our skirmishers, and the gallant Harrison gave the order, "Charge bayonets!—double-quick!—CLANG!" and away the noble fellows went, over breastworks, rifle pits, abatis, chevaux de frise, the parapet of the fort, into the main work, and the deed is accomplished. For a moment the thunderstruck rebels looked, and then took to flight. But our brave fellows were too close and too determined. They could not all escape. Two hundred and fifty in that single work were sent back as prisoners.

THE MAIN REBEL LINE REVERSED.

The importance of this gallant achievement, and those simultaneously made farther to the left, cannot be over-estimated. It rent the whole line in two. It separated the right and left wings of their army. If evacuation had been determined upon by them, it closed the main door of escape for their right wing. Moreover, it took from them commanding positions of great importance and a large amount of valuable artillery. It was not to be supposed that they would yield points of such vital importance to themselves without a further effort.

THE REBELS ARE FORCED TO RETAKE THE FORT.

Scarcely were we quiet in possession of the fort, when the rebels, having reorganized their forces and picked up some reinforcements, came up with a determined effort to retake it. They made a most desperate assault, staging up manfully against terrific discharges of grape and canister, and withering volleys of musketry; but it was all to no purpose. The heroic little garrison stood their ground bravely and obstinately, while the artillery of all our forts sent forth murderous assistance in rapid time. The din of the first assault was fully revived. Pandemonium would be a place of rest in comparison to the unceasing roar of that artillery, the shrieking and bursting of so many shells, the yells of the rebels, the rattle of the musketry, and the final charging of our men as the rebel lines wavered, broke and finally went back in disorder. Four times subsequently during the day did they attempt to retake this position, but were each time sent back in disorder. It was in one of these assaults that the rebel General A. P. Hill lost his life, while seeking in person to lead his men up to the work.

THE SIXTH AND TWENTY-FOURTH CORPS GAINING THE REAR OF THE REBELS.

These successive attacks and repulses consumed the entire day. Meantime, however, the Sixth and Twenty-fourth corps, having broken through the rebel lines in their front, were swinging around to their rear and coming down both upon their rear and flank. It was evident then that Petersburg was lost to the rebellion. If they could not retake these works where our lines were extended, how much less their chance when we were concentrating and bringing within reach a force so vastly superior to any they could possibly muster. The day was up with them, and they knew it; but now their anxiety was for night. "Oh, for night or blizzard," they might well cry.

LEE'S HEADQUARTERS CAPTURED.

The movements of the Sixth corps were so rapid after breaking their lines that even General Lee could scarcely keep his sacred person safe. As it was his headquarters were overhauled and fell into our hands. It is reported that they were destroyed.

THE EVACUATION OF PETERSBURG ANTICIPATED.

At night General Wilcox issued orders to his troops to be on the alert and watch closely the operations of the rebels. It was firmly expected that they would evacuate, and it was no part of the intention to let them get away without a parting word.

SUNDAY NIGHT.

Throughout the early part of the night operations were confined to skirmishing, more or less heavy at different hours, along the entire line. The utmost vigilance was exercised, and it was confidently anticipated that the rebels would take advantage of the darkness to get away.

A CONFERENCE.

Soon after dark General Wilcox was sent for by General Parke, and remained at corps headquarters until midnight, in conference with his superior.

THE REBELS DEMONSTRATE AT MIDNIGHT.

At a few minutes past twelve o'clock the rebels advanced and made a demonstration of attack on the centre of our lines. Roaring volleys of musketry aroused the reserves who, overcome by the fallacy of the re-

tracted day and night struggles, could not avoid sleeping whenever a moment's opportunity presented itself. Quickly the lines were in readiness and everybody at his post. Then the firing increased. Soon the forts opened with their heavy artillery. The rebel guns responded briskly. The darkness was intense. A thick mist hung over the country, mixed with the smoke of the past day's battle, rendering it a night of horrid character. Through the thick darkness a bank of red light hung over the city of Petersburg, betokening destruction and ruin in progress. And amid it all the unseen attack; the roar of musketry; the thunder of artillery; the cheering and shouting of the soldiers; the groping about in apprehension and fear—who can paint such scenes.

RETIRES.

But the attack was of short duration. The brave fellows in the trenches knew its import. They appreciated, also, how near they were to a glorious victory, and how important that they should stand their ground without wavering. And faithfully they performed their duty, sending the rebels back bleeding, disheartened, discouraged.

VIGILANCE.

Then followed a season of anxious stillness. Not a sound disturbed the quiet of that thick, black midnight. No picket firing, no signal guns, no attacks or indications of attack—a terrible, momentous, threatening quiet, which only can be appreciated by those who have spent a night on a battle field. Orders were issued to the pickets to advance and keep close to the rebel lines. Watch them closely; give them no chance to run; when they start go after them; no matter for rest; sleep comes after the victory. Vigilance was now all-important.

AN HOUR PASSED; EVERYTHING REMAINED QUIET. At last, tired out with watching and exhausted, I threw myself down and in a moment was dreaming of a happy home and dear ones far away from battle fields and scenes of blood and carnage.

THE JOINTS OF SHORT DURATION.

But my dreams were of short duration. At three o'clock I was roused by a staff officer with a message from the General. Our skirmishers occupied the main lines of the rebel works, and orders were issued for an immediate advance.

HALF-PAST THREE O'CLOCK, MONDAY, A. M.—PETERSBURG.

At half-past three o'clock a muffled, coffee swallowed away to Petersburg.

FOUR O'CLOCK—PETERSBURG OCCUPIED.

At four o'clock Colonel Ely reported to General Harrison that the First Michigan sharpshooters, leading the skirmishers and pressing hard upon the rear of the rebel forces, were the first to enter the long fought for city. With cheers and shouts of triumph they entered; but the fighting was done. At every step they picked up rebels anxious to surrender, but nowhere found any willing to fight. Petersburg was ours—won by hard fighting and determined bravery. If there be any confederacy left its people may seek to give the impression that they evacuated the city voluntarily. A more complete driving out was never accomplished. A victory more signal and indisputable has not been gained in this war.

A GLORIOUS CORPS.

The Ninth corps has made a reputation in this grand success sufficient, had it never before achieved distinction, to place it among the most gallant corps of the United States army. Left alone to hold the old lines that formerly had been garrisoned by the whole of the Army of the Potomac, it not only held them securely, but advanced against the main rebel lines, piercing them in several places, capturing and holding several forts and a score of guns, with a large number of prisoners, holding their advantages and contributing to a very large extent to the glorious achievement that has crowned the united efforts of the whole army.

THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE FIRST DIVISION.

The first division, under General Wilcox, in their operations of yesterday, not only held the extended line of two miles and over against all attacks, but themselves attacked the strongest positions on the rebel lines, capturing two forts, nine guns, nearly a thousand prisoners, several flags, &amp;c., and all with a loss to themselves of but about two hundred men. And now they add to their record the capture of the rest of the rebel lines, guns, tents, prisoners innumerable, and finally the city of Petersburg. Glory enough for one division.

GENERAL WILCOX.

was in the field throughout the whole affair, as the operations of the division, as the result demonstrated, with great judgment and ability. His men have behaved with a gallantry that is seldom equalled. Whether attacking or defending, they always presented the same determined front, never flinching, however fierce the danger.

COLONEL HARRISON.

of the First brigade, was particularly noticeable for his gallantry in the assault and defence of Fort Mahon. This affair exhibited great genius and skill, as well as gallantry in the manner in which it was accomplished, and should win for the able officer that conducted it a speedy promotion, which he well merits.

PORT MAHON.

The guns of Fort Emory, in our line, directly opposite Fort Mahon, contributed very materially to the success. This fort was garrisoned by Company M, of the First Connecticut heavy artillery, Captain James commanding, and its battery of thirty-pounder Parrotts was served most efficiently.

CASUALTIES.

Among the casualties during the day were the following:—

Colonel G. M. Gowan, 48th Pennsylvania, killed. Breve Major General Foster, Second division, wounded, seriously. Lieutenant Colonel Nichols, 1st Michigan sharpshooters, seriously. Captain Kelly, 5th Wisconsin, seriously. Captain Ballard, 5th Wisconsin, seriously. Captain De Laine, 1st Michigan sharpshooters, mortally. Lieutenant Steele, 5th Wisconsin, slightly. Lieutenant Colver, 9th Ohio, slightly. Lieutenant Monahan, 5th Michigan, slightly. Captain Richard Wade, General Harrison's staff, head.

THE WORK OF THE LEFT.

I would not have the impression obtain from anything that I have written above that the other two divisions of the Ninth corps have lacked in gallantry or enthusiasm in co-operation in the great events described. It is sufficient for me to write what I have seen. Other correspondents were sent to the lines, more to the left, who will doubtless do justice to the gallant men who there performed equally heroic deeds.

THE FORTIFICATIONS AND ENTRENCHMENTS ABOUT PETERSBURG.

My route from Fort Emory into the city of Petersburg was by the Baxter road, and led directly across the fortifications of both armies. A more difficult ride it was never my fortune to attempt—covered ways, rifle pits, chevaux-de-frise, breastworks, breastworks, chevaux-de-frise, rifle pits and covered ways, ditches that could be leaped, and ditches wide and deep, parallel and cross, and a series of abatis and entanglements of every description—the exhaustion of engineering skill. An entanglement of digging, such as never before was seen, covered the greater part of the distance. For a breadth of more than a mile the country is literally a day over. Every manner of earthwork has been thrown up by every army. Corrections of the lines, alterations, changes and perfectings have kept the armies busy for a year. It is impossible to describe this vast network of intrenchments from the hasty glance I had in riding through and over them, or to describe them in mere words. The civilian cannot better understand than by conceiving a vast system of sunken roads sufficient to manoeuvre armies of a hundred thousand men, without exposing any above the level of the ground. This is one feature of these extensive works, to which must be added the high and strong breastworks, running in zigzag courses, with batteries and redoubts interspersed; and then the advanced picket lines, with the various sunken paths of communication; and behind all the chain of strong forts, with wide and deep ditches, fringed with chevaux-de-frise, the same plan in front of all the other works.

EQUALLY FORTH UNDER BREASTWORKS.

Had not the infantry preceded me, and by clambering over and through these works broken down the ditches, and filled in ditches in places, it would have been utterly impossible for me to get through on horseback. As it was the task was not an easy one, and the appearance presented by the rider must have been somewhat of an improvement on the celebrated illustrations of the famous John Gilpin's noted ride. At times I required desperate clinging to the animal's mane to avoid slipping off backwards, and again the crupper required to be a strong to prevent more rapid head than the horse was making. Now and then a vigorous spurring would

produce an unsurpassed leap that would clear a ditch impassable in any other way. And so by most remarkable engineering and unequalled horsemanship, although the dangers encountered were frightful, I succeeded in getting safely through the labyrinth, and had the honor to be the first Yankee civilian to enter the city.

DESTRUCTION OF LEE'S ARMY.

Let me pause here for a little time while the victorious Army of the Potomac is marching into Petersburg, and describe the final dispersion of Lee's grand army.

STRENGTH OF THE ARMY DEFENDING PETERSBURG.

At the commencement of General Grant's operations on this line five days ago the rebels had a force at their command defending Petersburg variously estimated at from sixty to seventy-five thousand men. The defence of the city was the defence of Richmond. If one fell the other was certain to fall. Hence every available man was brought to confront Grant.

THIRTEEN CAPTURED.

Of this boasted army of veteran troops, the last hope of the rebellion, not less than twenty-five thousand have fallen into our hands as prisoners of war. These have been captured on the battle field as the fruit of severe fighting. Twelve thousand and five hundred of them had been delivered at City Point and disposed of up to last evening. So rapidly were they received that troops could not be spared to guard them all, and Admiral Porter volunteered the services of his sailors and marines for that duty; and the gallant tars of the Monitors (the depth of water not permitting them to get up to Richmond) thus found an opportunity of participating in the great final struggle of the war.

THE KILLED AND WOUNDED.

I have no data upon which to base an estimate of the casualties in the rebel ranks, but on every hand they are reported to be very heavy. Ordinarily thirty-three and a third per cent is a fair average of losses in a general engagement of any magnitude. But let it be supposed that, because of the lack of spirit in the rebel ranks, which caused them to shrink from the fight and not stand up so bravely as on former occasions, their losses were small. Make them but twenty-five per cent. That gives from fifteen to eighteen thousand killed and wounded—say fifteen thousand, which, added to the twenty-five thousand captured, makes forty thousand, more than half the entire army, at the maximum estimate of its strength, or three-fourths at the minimum estimate.

WHERE ARE THE REBELS?

These estimates leave from fifteen to thirty thousand men of the Petersburg rebel army yet alive and at large. Ad to this ten thousand occupying the defences of Richmond, making from twenty-five to forty thousand, the sole survivors of the grand army of Northern Virginia. These are divided into not less than four distinct fugitive bands, each seeking safety for itself alone, with no settled purpose or plan of junction, and no rest afforded them by their unrelenting pursuers to form plans.

HOW THE REBELS GOT AWAY.

Sheridan's success at the Five Forks on Saturday cut Lee's right wing off, since which time it had not been heard of. Doubtless it was then understood by them that defeat meant abandonment of the Petersburg and Richmond lines, and rightly considering Sheridan's flank movement a virtual defeat, these fellows made off with all haste. Their disappearance has been considered a mystery up to this time, the rebels themselves supposing them captured entire.

The vigorous push by the Ninth, Sixth and Twenty-fourth corps yesterday morning, penetrating and piercing the rebel lines, caused another separation of their forces, cutting off a second large body. Of the flight of these we have some trace. A portion of them started for the Appomattox, and succeeded in crossing that stream by means of a pontoon train at a point some ten or fifteen miles above Petersburg, while the rest, being hard pressed, could not get across, and fled up the river on its southern bank. Sheridan is still pursuing and pushing them, capturing more prisoners at every step.

A third detachment, consisting of those who held, or sought to hold, the works immediately in front of Petersburg, escaped through that city.

The fourth detachment, those in the defences of Richmond, are also fugitives, it now being known that that place is evacuated.

WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

Thus we have the grand army routed by its many battles and campaigns to but sixty or seventy-five thousand men; this number again reduced in the final struggle to twenty or thirty thousand, or, including the Richmond detachment, not in the battle, to from twenty-five to forty thousand; and these again separated by the chances of battle into four distinct squads, each separately put to flight and being vigorously pursued. Thus the rebel army of Northern Virginia is in reality destroyed. The general direction of the flight of each squad is towards the Danville Railroad. Probably they have a plan of forming a junction at Appomattox or Burkeville. But the plan will be frustrated. Neither of the fragments will be permitted to halt at any point long enough for another to find it. They are on the run, fairly put to flight, and Sheridan's magnificent cavalry, with the elated, victorious Army of the Potomac, are on their heels, picking up additional prisoners by hundreds and thousands almost at every turn. A more complete destruction of an army was never known. Even Waterloo, when the facts are learned, will be found not to surpass it. The fugitive character of this once magnificent army is attested by the multitude of its members found in Petersburg, hid away in houses, barns and other places of concealment, anxious to give themselves up as prisoners rather than stand a long and hopeless pursuit. It is further attested by their leaving behind them their artillery, tents and all their baggage, and by the roads lined with their cast off guns and accoutrements. Goodly to the rebel army of Northern Virginia. It has been a noble army, worthy of a better cause and a more honorable death.

THE OCCUPATION OF PETERSBURG.

When Ely's brigade entered the city daylight had not yet dawned. Seeing that the rebels would not fight, and that but a scattered few remained in front of them, when the outskirts of the town were reached the firing ceased, and the troops made a dash in, and captured the most of the small skirmish line that had been falling back before them. They then had undisputed possession of the city, and at half-past four o'clock Colonel Ely so reported it to General Wilcox. At that hour your correspondent rode in.

THE SIGHTS.

The streets at first seemed deserted, but the cheers of the excited soldiers, as they marched through the town, soon brought out swarms of negroes—men, women and children—who manifested their gladness by every conceivable demonstration. Aprons, handkerchiefs, sheets, table cloths, anything that was or ever had been white, were waved by these overjoyed people, either as tokens of amity and submission, or in welcome. It was hard to determine which. They bowed and scraped, danced, shouted and sung hymns, swung their hats and turbans, laughed and cried, and acted altogether very much like people crazy with joy. "Blessed be good Jesus de Yankee he come!" "Thank de Lord you's all here!" "Dress de Lord, we's been lookin' for you dese many days." "Glad to see you all; we like you a heap better now we dux de rebels." These and many similar expressions met us on all hands, while the friendly salutations and greetings were so numerous that we wearied of returning them. Your correspondent, being the first mounted man in town, was looked upon as some high military dignity, and received more than his share of these hospitable demonstrations. One negro woman insisted on kissing my hand, while many of mothers presented their babies for a distinguished touch. It was somewhat embarrassing, as well as a little annoying, to be so compelled to explain at every street corner that I was no very great personage after all.

RECEIVING OF BRICKS—AN UNEXPECTED FIRE BRUISE.

Entering at the upper end of the main street of the town, I forced my way along a most beautiful avenue, lined at first with elegant dwellings, and lower down with blocks of stores that would not look mean in Broadway, to the Richmond railroad depot on the river, at the lower end of the street. Turning to the right on Water street, and going one block, I entered a street leading to the river, across which at this point was a wagon and passenger bridge and the principal railroad bridge. The latter had been thoroughly destroyed. Its abutments had been blown down with powder, and the superstructure burned. The wooden trestle bridge known

as the Lower bridge, had evidently been the last used by the rebels, and was but just fired. Presuming upon my recognized authority as an officer of high degree, I sent the negroes off after the engines, and very soon saw a first class fire brigade improvised and at work extinguishing the flames. Transferring my authority to a white man, who represented himself to be a fireman and seemed willing to go, I left the scene to make other observations.

A BRIDGE FOR GOTTEN.

Just below this point was another railroad bridge—temporary affair, built by the military authorities for our own accommodation—but as the track across it communicates with all the railroads entering in Petersburg, it is an important structure for us. This bridge the rebels had forgotten or neglected to destroy. It was just as good as ever it was.

THE CAMPBELL BRIDGE.

Crossing the river at the upper end of the town, was wholly destroyed.

DESTRUCTION OF RAILROAD PROPERTY.

Most of the railroad property in the city was destroyed. The depots were not fired, but the rolling stock that could not be got away was burned. How much destruction this entailed in the limited time allotted me I could not ascertain.

TOBACCO BURNED.